

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSM-03 DHA-02 TRSE-00
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-07 IO-13
EUR-12 AF-10 USIE-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 SSO-00 /097 W
-----261546Z 057063 /40

O R 261446Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6350
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO 6876
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 3752

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IS
SUBJECT: DAYAN AS FOREIGN MINISTER: AN INITIAL ASSESSMENT

BEGIN SUMMARY: MOSHE DAYAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT THAT HE HAD
AGREED TO SERVE AS MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN A
BEGIN GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN ISRAEL BY SURPRISE. THERE
IS NO INDICATION THAT HE WILL BE FOLLOWED BY OTHER
LABOR PARTY MEMBERS, AND HE IS ALREADY COMING UNDER
CRITICISM FROM THAT PARTY. BEGIN APPEARS TO HAVE
PULLED OFF A COUP IN GETTING DAYAN TO SERVE WITH HIM.
DAYAN HIMSELF APPARENTLY BELIEVES THAT HE CAN HAVE
A MODERATING INFLUENCE IN A GOVERNMENT WITH BEGIN AS
PRIME MINISTER AND WEIZMAN AS DEFENSE MINISTER. END
SUMMARY.

1. A BRIEF ANNOUNCEMENT BY LIKUD HEADQUARTERS SHORTLY
BEFORE MIDNIGHT MAY 25 THAT FORMER DEFENSE MINISTER
MOSHE DAYAN HAD AGREED TO SERVE AS MINISTER OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN A BEGIN GOVERNMENT CAME AS THE
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LATEST IN A CONTINUING SERIES OF SHOCKS ON THE
ISRAELI POLITICAL SCENE.

2. AT A GERMAN NATIONAL DAY RECEPTION TODAY DAYAN
WAS THE CENTER OF ALL ATTENTION. HE ACCEPTED
CONGRATULATIONS MODESTLY AND PROVED QUITE WILLING
TO TALK ABOUT HIS MOVE. HE SAID HIS ACCEPTANCE

HAD BEEN "IN PRINCIPLE" AND WOULD, OF COURSE, BE DEPENDENT ON BEGIN'S ABILITY TO PUT A GOVERNMENT TOGETHER. HE HAD REACHED THE DECISION TO ACCEPT AFTER HE HAD ASKED HIMSELF WHETHER IT WOULD BE BETTER TO HAVE DAYAN IN A GOVERNMENT WHICH INCLUDED BEGIN AS PRIME MINISTER AND WEIZMAN AS DEFENSE MINISTER OR NOT. HE HAD REACHED THE CONCLUSION THAT HE COULD DO MORE INSIDE THE GOVERNMENT. (COMMENT: THE IMPLICATION WAS THAT HIS WOULD BE A MODERATING INFLUENCE.) DAYAN ALSO SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN CALLED THIS MORNING BY ZARMI, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE LABOR PARTY, ASKING ABOUT HIS LABOR MANDATE. HE SAID HE HAD TOLD ZARMI THAT HE WOULD MAKE A DECISION ABOUT DISPOSING OF THE MANDATE WHEN THE GOVERNMENT WAS FINALLY PUT TOGETHER. HE WAS REALLY NOT INTERESTED IN TAKING A MANDATE AWAY FROM THE LABOR PARTY NOR DID HIS BECOMING FOREIGN MINISTER HINGE ON HIS KNESSET SEAT.

3. AS FAR AS WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ASCERTAIN, DAYAN'S MOVE CAME AS A COMPLETE SURPRISE TO HIS LABOR PARTY COLLEAGUES. HE DID NOT EVEN DISCUSS HIS PLANS WITH HIS EX-RAFI COLLEAGUES--PERES AND YAACOBI. PERES SAID THIS MORNING, "I RECEIVED AN UNPLEASANT SURPRISE." (SEE SEPTTEL FOR PERES' DISCUSSION OF DAYAN'S MOVE WITH THE AMBASSADOR.) THE LABOR PARTY WAS, OF COURSE, AWARE OF CONVERSATIONS IN RECENT DAYS BETWEEN DAYAN AND BEGIN BUT THEY WERE STUNNED
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THAT HE HAD ACCEPTED THE POSITION OF FOREIGN MINISTER. THERE IS TALK THAT ONE OR TWO OTHER LABOR PARTY MEMBERS MIGHT FOLLOW DAYAN BUT THIS REMAINS UNCERTAIN. IT IS ALSO UNCLEAR WHETHER DAYAN WILL NOW RESIGN FROM THE LABOR PARTY. THE REACTION OF HIS LABOR PARTY COLLEAGUES IS BEST TYPIFIED BY THE REMARK TO US BY UZI BARAM, CHAIRMAN OF THE JERUSALEM BRANCH AND LIKELY SUCCESSOR AS THE PARTY'S SECRETARY GENERAL, "COMPLETE SHOCK" AND OF YISRAEL KARGMAN WHO SAID DAYAN'S ACT WAS ONE OF "POLITICAL PROSTITUTION..

4. WE SEE SEVERAL FACTORS INVOLVED IN BEGIN'S EFFORTS TO WIN DAYAN TO HIS TEAM. IT WAS CLEAR FROM EARLIER CONVERSATIONS THAT BEGIN ALWAYS WANTED DAYAN TO JOIN WITH HIM AND MADE A STRENUOUS EFFORT DURING THE CAMPAIGN TO PERSUADE HIM TO JOIN THE LIKUD. BEGIN PROBABLY HAS ALSO REFLECTED FROM HIS HOSPITAL BED THAT HE MUST HAVE THE

DEFENSE AND FOREIGN MINISTRIES IN THE HANDS OF COLLEAGUES WHOM HE TRUSTS, ESPECIALLY ON QUESTIONS REGARDING THE TERRITORIES. WE UNDERSTAND THAT MINISTER OF DEFENSE-DESIGNATE WEIZMAN WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN GETTING BEGIN AND DAYAN TOGETHER AND SUPPORTS WHOLEHEARTEDLY DAYAN JOINING THE TEAM. ALSO, BEGIN PROBABLY WISHED TO IMPRESS UPON THE DMC THAT HE CAN MOVE AHEAD IN FORMING A GOVERNMENT WITHOUT THEM AND TO STRESS THAT HIS POSITION ON THE TERRITORIES IS NOT OPEN TO INTRA-COALITION BARGAINING.

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5. RADIO ISRAEL HAS ANNOUNCED THAT AN AGREEMENT WAS REACHED BETWEEN BEGIN AND DAYAN ON THE QUESTION OF THE TERRITORIES AND THE LIKUD SPOKESMAN HAS INFORMED US THAT THE BASIS OF DAYAN'S DECISION TO ACCEPT THE PORTFOLIO WAS A LETTER BEGIN GAVE HIM IN APRIL WHEN THE TWO WERE DISCUSSING A POSSIBLE DAYAN SWITCH TO THE LIKUD. IT PROVIDES THAT THERE WOULD BE NO ANNEXATION AND NO EXTENSION OF ISRAELI JURISDICTION WITHOUT KNESSET APPROVAL OR WHILE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS ARE IN PROGRESS. (AN ENABLING ACT, DATING FROM TEN YEARS AGO, PROVIDES THE GOVERNMENT WITH THE LEGAL AUTHORITY TO EXTEND ISRAELI JURISDICTION TO THE WEST BANK BUT DAYAN APPARENTLY HAS INSISTED THAT THE STEP NOT BE TAKEN

WITHOUT FULL KNESSET APPROVAL.) THUS, THE STATUS OF THE WEST BANK IS TO BE A CONTINUATION OF THE STATUS QUO.

6. IT APPEARS THERE ARE THREE MAJOR IMPLICATIONS FOR THE DMC, ALL OF WHICH AFFECT THE LIKELIHOOD
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OF ITS JOINING BEGIN'S COALITION. FIRST, IF DAYAN MOVES TO THE COALITION WITHOUT RESIGNING HIS KNESSET SEAT AND IF THE SAME PATTERN IS FOLLOWED BY ANY OTHER ALIGNMENT MKS THIS WOULD MEAN ADDITIONAL VOTES FOR BEGIN'S COALITION MAJORITY, AND, THEREFORE, LESS OF A NEED FOR THE DMC TO JOIN THE COALITION. SECOND, YADIN (OR ANY OTHER DMC MEMBER) HAS BEEN BLOCKED FROM A MINISTRY WHICH HE MIGHT REASONABLY HAVE DEMANDED FOR THE DMC'S JOINING BEGIN'S COALITION. THIRD, DAYAN'S JOINING THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT WILL BE SEEN AS A REINFORCEMENT OF THE LIKUD POSITION ON THE WEST BANK OPPOSED BY THE DMC. A MEETING PLANNED FOR TODAY BETWEEN DMC AND LIKUD REPRESENTATIVES HAS BEEN CANCELLED. ON THE OTHER HAND, SOME DMC LEADERS (FOR EXAMPLE, MEIR ZOREA) MIGHT NOT BE DISTURBED BY DAYAN'S HARD LINE ON THE WEST BANK. (IT IS OF SOME INTEREST THAT TWO PROMINENT DMC LEADERS --ZOREA AND YADIN-- WERE MEMBERS OF THE AGRANAT COMMISSION ON THE OCTOBER WAR WHICH CLEARED DAYAN OF NEGLIGENCE IN CONNECTION WITH THE WAR.) THEREFORE, THE REACTION IN THE DMC MIGHT BE A MIXED ONE ALTHOUGH, ON BALANCE, WE BELIEVE THE RESULT WILL BE A LESSENING OF THE LIKELIHOOD OF THE DMC GOING INTO THE COALITION.

7. IT IS DIFFICULT TO SAY AT THIS POINT WHETHER THE RESULT WILL BE A MORE OR LESS MODERATE GOVERNMENT. IT CAN BE ARGUED THAT THE PROSPECTIVE GOVERNING TRIO--BEGIN, WEIZMAN AND DAYAN--IS MORE HAWKISH THAN AT LEAST ONE LIKELY TRIO WHICH COULD HAVE EVOLVED--BEGIN, WEIZMAN AND YADIN. NEVERTHELESS, DAYAN HAS IN THE PAST DISPLAYED FLEXIBILITY IN HIS ATTITUDES: HE IS AN ORIGINAL THINKER, NOT WEDDED TO OLD CONCEPTS AND HE DOES NOT HESITATE TO CHANGE HIS MIND WHEN HE BELIEVES CIRCUMSTANCES
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HAVE ALTERED. IN SUM, BEGIN HAS PROBABLY PULLED
OFF A MAJOR COUP; HE NOW HAS AS THE LEADING MEMBERS
OF HIS TEAM A TRIO WHICH SHOULD INCREASE LIKUD'S
ACCEPTABILITY ABROAD ALTHOUGH THE INTERNAL
IMPLICATIONS MAY GIVE HIM DIFFICULTY.
LEWIS

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